
Capital Budget Committee

HB 1587

Brief Description: Relating to capital facilities at the Rainier School.

Sponsors: Representatives Shabro, Morrell, Roach and Woods; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Repeals statutory references to Washington State University farming operations on property at the Rainier School.

Hearing Date: 2/10/05

Staff: Marziah Kiehn-Sanford (786-7349).

Background:

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) operates five Residential Habilitation Centers (RHCs), which provide 24-hour residential housing for qualified individuals with developmental disabilities needing institutional care.

The Rainier School, located in Buckley, is one of the RHCs. The campus includes approximately 620 acres of forest land and 280 acres of agricultural land. In 1981, the Legislature enacted legislation requiring the DSHS to transfer "cognizance and control" of state owned agricultural land located at the Rainier School to Washington State University (WSU) for use as a dairy/forage research facility. WSU has discontinued its research operation on the Rainier School property in 2002 and has no future agricultural plans for the property.

The DSHS and WSU are negotiating an interagency agreement under which WSU agrees to relinquish all interest in the Rainier School property to the DSHS and support the proposed legislation repealing sections of the RCW pertaining to WSU control of the land at the Rainier School. In exchange, the DSHS proposes that WSU receive half the net proceeds of a conservation easement on Rainier School forest land currently under negotiation with the Pierce County Conservation Future Program.

The existing Rainier School plant cannot meet new standards for wastewater discharge into the nearby White River. The DSHS proposes to use the Rainier School agricultural lands for a composting and water reuse system that will enhance the effectiveness of a new wastewater treatment system developed in conjunction with the City of Buckley. The DSHS portion of design

of the new system was funded in the 2003-05 capital budget at \$250,000. A request for the state share of construction (\$4,350,000) is pending consideration by the Legislature.

Summary of Bill:

Statutory reference to the discontinued farming operations at the Rainier School formerly operated by WSU is deleted. The 1981 transfer of dairy operations from Rainier School to WSU and a division of services and expenses related to road maintenance, water and sewer services and buildings and ground from the original transfer are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2005.